

# Creating an Agenda for Change

Arts Council of Wales Organisational Review:  
introducing our new organisation



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru  
Arts Council of Wales



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David Nash, Mostyn (image: Martin Barlow)

front cover: Jessica Lloyd-Jones, close up of medical capsule



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Arts Council of Wales operates an equal opportunities policy.

## Welcome...



The conclusion of our Organisational Review marks an important moment of change for the Arts Council of Wales.

This change has its origins in last year's Investment Review. In 2010 we challenged arts organisations across Wales to examine the quality of their creative activities, and the efficiency of their businesses. *Renewal and transformation* was the Review's title and our intent. Our purpose was to ensure and develop the arts that thrive and engage with the hearts and minds of the people of Wales. The challenge was a tough one. The challenge has been met.

Now it's our turn.

It's vital that we apply the same disciplines of transformation and renewal to ourselves, making sure that more of the public funds given to us are spent on direct arts activity. This goal was given added impetus by the funding settlement that we received from the Welsh Government last year. As part of that settlement we're required to reduce the proportion of our grant in aid that we allocate to our running costs by 12% over three years. This is equivalent to savings over that period of just under £300,000.

Reductions of this scale are challenging. However, we've chosen to view this as a moment of opportunity – a chance to gather our thoughts and to look critically and objectively at what we do. And that's what we've been examining over these past few months.

We've audited our activities and asked ourselves some tough questions about how we can be relevant and useful in a fast-changing world. We've commissioned independent research into the services that we provide, with views passed on to us from artists, arts organisations, stakeholders and our funders in Government.

The research was instructive. We were told that the Arts Council needed to be:

- a strong, independent and authoritative champion of the arts in Wales
- attuned to the changing ways in which the arts today are created, presented and enjoyed
- a source of specialist expertise in and about the arts, able to offer practical advice on the operational and financial challenges that artists and arts organisations face

- accessible and available, wherever you are across Wales
- an efficient and fair distributor of public funds
- committed to collaboration and partnership working

How we intend to achieve this is what this document explains.

Change can be disruptive and unsettling, not least to our staff.

There are fewer posts in our new staff structure – we reduce from just over 90 full time equivalent posts to 76. Over the coming weeks we'll be redeploying staff, where we can, into roles in the new organisation. Once this process has been completed, we'll be able to let you have a full list of Arts Council staff, with some commentary on what they'll be doing. We hope to be able to do this early in the new year.

Until then it's business as usual.

Our staff pride themselves on providing a professional, high quality service, in spite of the pressures that this current period of change and uncertainty brings. I have no doubt that this will continue and I thank them for their commitment.

We're not waiting until 2013 to make the changes. We're moving forward with a greater sense of urgency. Our goal is to have our new structure up and running by the beginning of April 2012, creating an organisation that combines the flexibility and entrepreneurialism that you've called for, with the robustness and accountability that you'd expect of a public body.

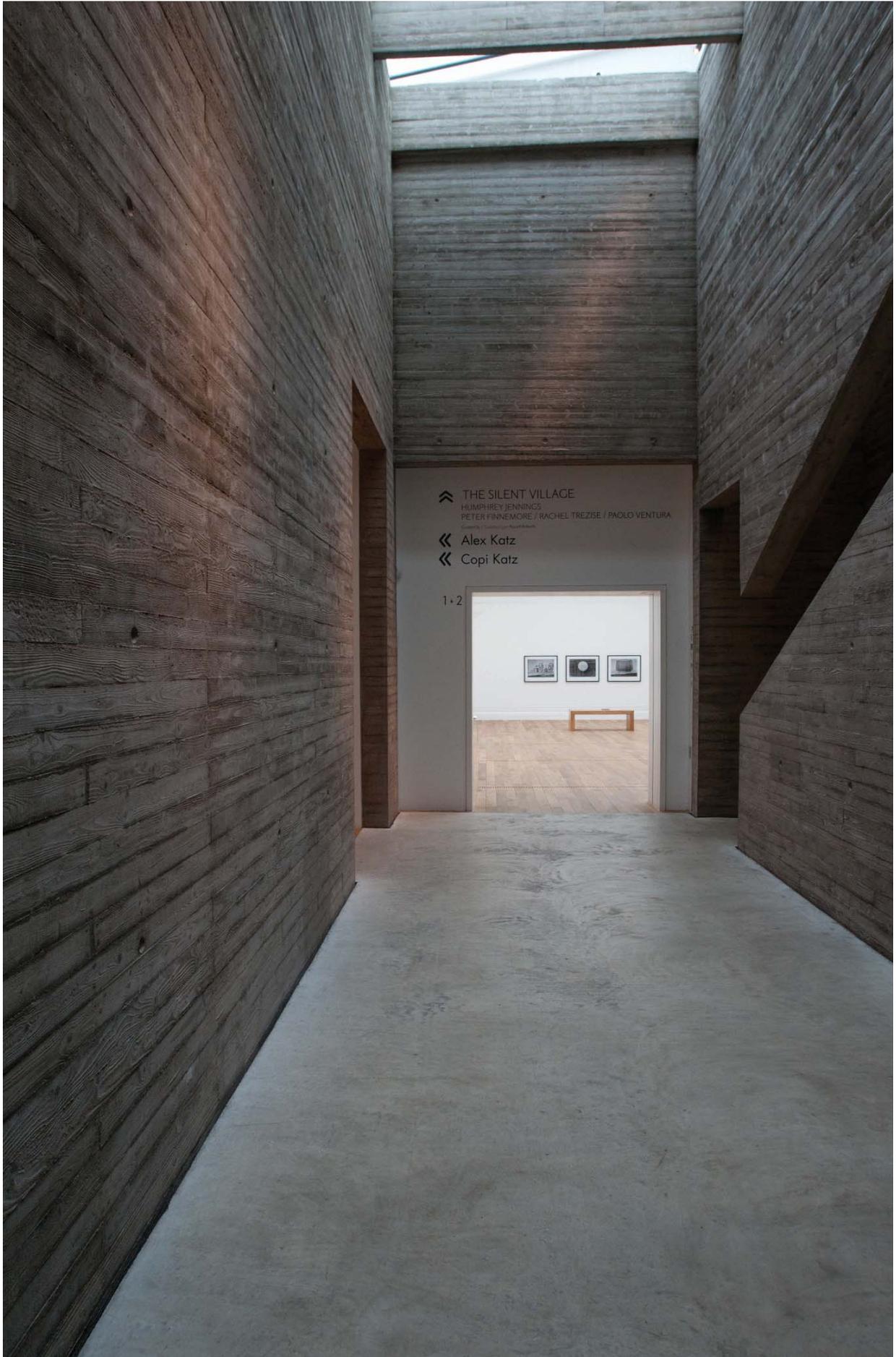
Many aspects of our future approach will be familiar. Arts expertise will, of course, be at the heart of our new organisation, and we'll continue to have staff based in Arts Council offices across Wales. But there will also be some important changes, reflecting the emphasis given to areas of the arts that we've identified as a priority.

The arts change and evolve, as does the world around us. The way that we work and organise ourselves has to reflect that. And rather than react to events, Council has taken control of its future and is setting out an ambitious agenda for change, clearly and decisively.

With best wishes



Dai Smith, Chair  
15 November 2011



THE SILENT VILLAGE  
HUMPHREY JENNINGS  
PETER FINNEMORE / RACHEL TREZISE / PAOLO VENTURA  
Curated by 1 Contemporary Art Foundation

← Alex Katz  
← Copi Katz

1+2



Mostyn (image: Martin Barlow)

## Timeline



## Embracing the challenge of change

We build our new organisation on firm foundations.

More people than ever before are enjoying and taking part in the arts in Wales. Our investment in the construction and refurbishment of venues has transformed the cultural landscape of Wales, creating award winning arts buildings. These are providing new opportunities for people to enjoy the arts in the best possible surroundings.

Growth in the arts is generating new jobs and contributing to economic renewal across Wales. And our nation's artists and arts organisations are increasingly enjoying richly deserved acclaim on the world stage. We have played an influential role in helping to make this happen.

But the arts are changing – in Wales and across the rest of the world.

Today's artists explore creative possibilities across the full diversity of arts practice. The familiar artforms across the performing, visual and applied arts are as important as ever and will be fully represented in our new organisation. But as artists and organisations work across the arts, traditional artform boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred. And the growth in the creative capability of digital technology is opening up opportunities to make and distribute art in ways that were unimaginable only a decade ago.

We need to organise ourselves around the expertise and skills that this changing world demands.

*right: Wales Millennium Centre (image: Sandra Duncan)  
below: Chapter (image: Andy Haslam)*





Creative Units, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, designed by Heatherwick Studio  
(photo: James Morris)

## Arts at the heart

### Expertise, knowledge and experience

As you'd expect, the arts will continue to be at the heart of everything we do. And since arts expertise is the currency that we trade in, it's essential that our expertise is of the highest quality. We must ensure that we talk authoritatively across all aspects of the arts.

Our arts experts will cover the full range of the arts, from theatre, music, dance, the visual and applied arts to public art, digital art and the diversity of combined and multidisciplinary arts practice. In all, we'll have over 40 members of staff, spread across Wales, who will be using their specialist expertise to help grow and develop the arts, at home and abroad.



### What can you expect to see?

- clearly identified arts expertise across our staff
- teams of arts specialists, organised and co-ordinated in ways that can offer you the practical support you need
- arts specialists spread across Wales
- senior staff driving forward our policy priorities around Arts; Engagement and Participation; and Enterprise and Regeneration
- an improved Information Service, with easier ways of getting the advice and information about the arts that you need

Jonathan Anderson, *Dark Star*, Mission Gallery

## We're re-launching our network of National Advisers

We need to be well informed and balanced in our views, aware of the full diversity of contemporary creative activity. It's also important that we're familiar with the latest developments in the arts, in Wales and further afield.

One of the ways that we'll do this is through our network of National Advisers – people who give voluntarily of their time to assist us, and their peers, in developing the quality of the arts in Wales. Working together, our Council, staff and Advisers will aim to offer to Wales the most dynamic and comprehensive resource of specialist arts expertise.

### What can you expect to see?

- Advisers assisting with and contributing to policy development
- Advisers seeing and reporting on the arts – assessing work and spotting new talent
- Advisers assisting with the assessment of applications for funding
- Staff and Advisers working together to understand better current trends and developments in Wales' arts



Sarah Lee Pryke  
NDCWales Associate, Springboard 2011  
(image: Roy Campbell-Moore)



*above: Eddie Ladd, the Bobby Sands memorial race  
Creative Wales Award winner 2010  
(image: Tim Freeman)*

## But we want to go further in developing a more dynamic and collaborative approach.

Quite rightly, we're expected to demonstrate leadership – of the arts, for the arts and through the arts. But while we should be bold enough to take the difficult decisions when these are needed, we should also be sensible enough to seek out the help and expertise of others when it's to the benefit of our overall aims.

Arts development presents a wide range of complex challenges. We, the Arts Council, will have only a small part of the solution to these challenges ourselves. So we'll be looking for a new, mature relationship with artists and arts organisations – one based on trust and mutual respect.

We expect the key organisations that we fund to play a leadership role in terms of artistic innovation and audience development. We expect them to be well managed and governed. In return, we'll support them to develop their businesses and encourage them to develop new markets for their activities. And we'll be more inclusive in the way that we work, inviting artists, arts organisations and advisers to work more closely with us, seeing work, helping us with funding decisions, contributing to the development of policy and strategy.

This will be a challenging change for us to make – habitual ways of working can be well ingrained – but it's a change we're determined to make.

## Preparing the ground

We want to bring a sharper focus to our arts policies and strategies.

Our current Corporate Plan extends until 2012, and our artform and international strategies are due for renewal during that year. We also identified, through our Investment Review, new areas where policy needed to be improved. There's a danger of a proliferation of strategy that bewilders and confuses. So an essential early task for the 'new' organisation will be to bring greater focus – a crisp, clear statement of intent that's inspiring, engaging and easy to read. We will consult widely on our future plans.

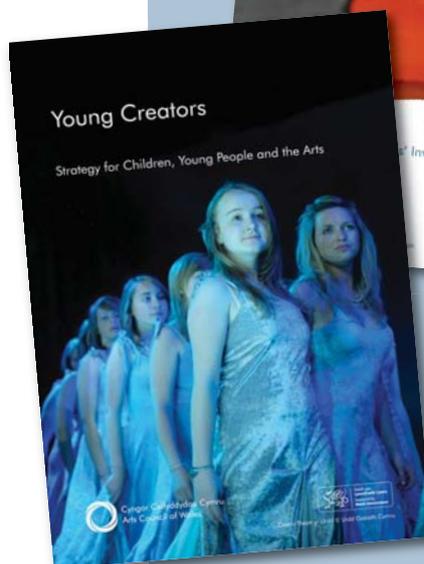
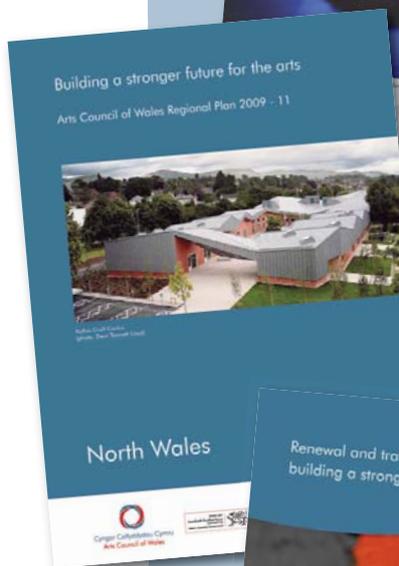
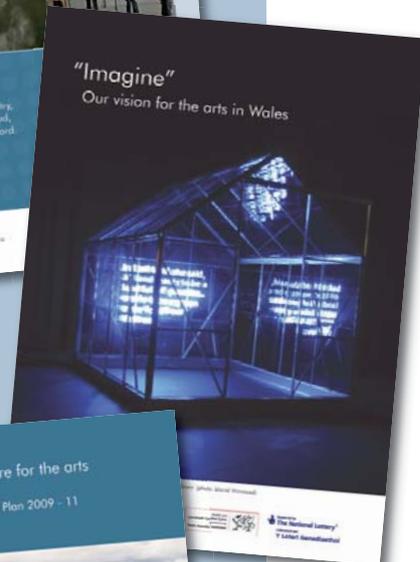
We remain committed to

**“ a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life of the nation. ”**

And this is reflected in our four priorities:

1. Supporting the creation of the best in great art
2. Encouraging more people to enjoy and take part in the arts
3. Growing the arts economy
4. Making the Arts Council an effective and efficient business

Excellence, in everything that we fund, will continue to be a fundamental guiding ambition, as is our determination to extend the reach and impact of our activities, touching the lives of more people and communities across Wales.



## Developing better arts for wider audiences is a widely shared ambition.

It's not a job that we can, or should, try to do on our own. Success depends more than anything else on the artists and arts organisations that we support.

But fish are only as healthy as the water they swim in. Artists and arts organisations need a supportive environment if they're to prosper – an environment which:

- identifies and nurtures creative talent, wherever it's found in Wales, to its full potential
- supports and celebrates imagination, innovation and ambition
- nurtures creativity through the medium of Welsh and English
- enables artists to develop a professional career in Wales, and organisations to exploit new markets
- offers a range of arts experiences for audiences to enjoy and take part
- develops the creative traditions of Wales and reinterprets them with contemporary relevance
- is international in outlook



Arts Council of Wales Annual Conference  
(image: Keith Morris)

This is a big challenge. And it's why we wish to signal clearly that we intend to move towards playing a more strategic, imaginative and entrepreneurial role in shaping the conditions that nurture and support creativity.

## Persuading more people to enjoy and take part in the arts

### We mustn't forget the audience.

Reaching out to new audiences will have much more prominence in our future plans. Whether attending an event or getting involved as a participant, we want to widen dramatically the range of people who engage with, challenge and reinvent cultural expression, sometimes in new and surprising ways. It's this which revitalises our cultural life and why it's important that we reach out beyond the known and the familiar.



*The Passion*, Michael Sheen, National Theatre Wales  
(image: Geraint Lewis)

We know from our research and survey work that arts audiences are becoming more diverse. But we know, too, that access to the arts is still hugely unequal for all kinds of social, economic, geographical and financial reasons. As a public body we believe that this isn't an acceptable state of affairs.

We will support the Welsh Government's *Communities First* agenda, playing our part in bringing high quality arts opportunities within reach of the most disadvantaged people in our most deprived areas. We expect our work in this area to contribute positively to the implementation of the Government's Child Poverty Strategy.

### Equalities will be at the heart of our future work.

The arts help us understand difference. But they also help us to explore and articulate our common humanity, our place in the world. They help us to express what's distinctive and singular, but also what unites and binds us together.

So we're interested in the many, not just the few. A generous, fair minded and tolerant society values and respects the needs, interests and creativity of all its citizens. It's a society that's impatient of disadvantage, that embraces equality and celebrates difference, wherever it's found in race, gender, sexuality, language, age or disability. And in doing so, it promotes unity of social purpose within the diversity of cultures that makes contemporary Wales a vibrant and exciting place. Our vision is of an arts sector that's naturally inclusive and diverse, and more vibrant, exciting and relevant because of this.

We will bring informed, imaginative thinking to the integration of equalities across the whole of our organisation.



Equalities will underpin our future work – in the funds and services that we offer, and in the way that we manage our affairs. Our *Open doors, open minds* strategy, agreed by Council earlier this year, provides the framework that will guide our actions.



Valleys Kids, Operation Zulu workshop

top: *MAGICK - The Last Royal Wizard*, SWICA  
(image: Paddy Faulkner, Panopticphotography)

### What can you expect to see?

- clear strategies for addressing Equalities and Child Poverty
- new help for artists from communities who've felt impeded in their efforts to access our funding and developmental services
- the continuation of our Night Out scheme, bringing high quality events and performances to local communities across Wales
- funding to assist community and participatory arts in local communities
- better information and data about access to the arts

## Inspiring and engaging young people

We're attaching greater importance to our work with and for young people.

We know that an active engagement with the arts can transform the way children and young people learn and explore the world around them. It can change the way they see themselves – even what they dream of for the future – as well as helping them to develop life skills.

The arts can nurture a young person's ability to question and make connections, to develop the capacity for independent, critical thought. They can inspire young people with new ambition and confidence, challenging poverty of aspiration and breaking the cycle of deprivation caused by low educational achievement. It can be

the key that unlocks the door to further and higher education, and in time employment.

Our new strategy *Young Creators*, focuses on two objectives: supporting our young people to develop their creative talents; and, fostering an environment in which that talent can be identified, inspired, nurtured and celebrated.

We want to see more attention given to young people learning through the experience of doing, inspired by the opportunity to work alongside our professional artists and arts organisations.



National Youth Choir of Wales

We want as many young people as possible in Wales to believe that the opportunity is there for them to be the best they can – or want – to be, performing with their peers at the highest level, celebrating and demonstrating their creative talents.

Above all else, we want young people to have the opportunity to enjoy and take part in creative activity that they find relevant, contemporary, and exciting.

### What can you expect to see?

- new initiatives to identify and nurture young talent
- programmes that support improvements in schools' arts provision
- further phases of our popular Reach the Heights and Splash Arts Cymru programmes
- new partnerships initiatives with the Welsh Government and local authorities across Wales
- capital funding to help create spaces for young people's creativity
- the active involvement of young people in monitoring, reviewing and prioritising the work that we're supporting and delivering



Night Out Young Promoters Scheme, Bash Street Theatre  
(image: Hazel Hannant)

## The business of the arts

Exploiting the commercial potential of the arts and creative industries will be a new area of priority.

The arts are important in their own right. But we also know that the creative and cultural industries are a vital engine for Wales' economy. They contribute directly in terms of jobs and the generation of wealth through the creation, distribution and retail of goods and services.

Creativity will permeate all areas of business activity in the future. Creativity reaches beyond the realm of arts and culture, though they are its natural nurturing ground. Creativity is a skill that can be used to bring innovative solutions to familiar problems, and encourage new ways of thinking across all sectors. The successful economies of the future will be those that can capitalise on their creative potential. Creativity can have many positive benefits, helping income generation, growth and employment to enabling social inclusion. It puts people and skills – 'human capital' – at its core. In today's society this is as critical as any other economic resource.

Given the scale and complexity of the creative industries, the appropriate point of public sector intervention isn't always clear. We certainly shouldn't be spending public money where it's not needed, where the market can sustain an activity without compromising its artistic integrity.



David Colwell  
(image: Dewi Tannat Lloyd)

So instead we'll focus on two issues.

Firstly, we'll support the Welsh Government's Creative Industries team in the delivery of their part of the Government's Economic Renewal Programme.

From the Performing Arts to Visual Arts and Crafts, Architecture to Publishing, Film and Broadcast to Fashion, Advertising and Design to Games and Software – all of these sectors depend for their success in an increasingly competitive international market on creativity, imagination and entrepreneurialism.

If we're to help retain talent and keep intellectual capital in Wales, we need better ways of:

- organising public procurement
- accessing workspace and facilities
- developing new workforce skills
- helping micro-businesses' ability to 'scale up' work for larger markets
- maximising Intellectual Property
- accessing working capital to exploit creative opportunities

Secondly, we should learn from some of the techniques and strategies that are adopted in the more commercial areas of the creative industries. Traditional subsidy models for the arts will come under increasing pressure in future years. We need to help our revenue funded organisations in particular to identify new sources of income and to become less dependent on public funds.

### Small nation, big art.

Through our Wales Arts International team we'll continue to foster international artistic excellence in Wales. We'll also work to improve the international impact and recognition for the arts and culture of Wales on the world stage.

We'll continue to facilitate international work in the arts through collaborations, projects, networks and communication. And we'll develop our partnership with the Welsh Government, the British Council and our European collaborators to ensure that artists from Wales are visible in key international arenas.

The excellence and creativity of Wales' arts contributes powerfully to the development of our cultural relations with the rest of the world.

Many of Wales' artists and arts organisations are internationally significant in their own right, and there's more to be done in opening new markets for their work, and developing their role as cultural ambassadors for Wales.

Wales is a devolved country within the UK and an expanded Europe. The Welsh Government has, and is, developing relationships internationally. Cultural and artistic components to these relations are important.

We'll attract activity into the country that benefits the arts. Wales needs to be "open for business", getting its share of the high-profile international market in conferences, trade fairs and major cultural events. We need to be competing internationally, winning these events for Wales. An early example of this approach is the role that we've played in helping to bring the major international world music showcase, WOMEX, to Cardiff in 2013.

## What can you expect to see?

- training and professional help to assist organisations with the development of their businesses
  - new initiatives to fund and develop creative and business skills
  - clearer information on how to access specialist business and technical expertise
  - advice and support to artists and arts organisations wishing to work internationally
- projects to improve artists mobility and to encourage European networking
  - the implementation of our new partnership agreement with the British Council
  - the international world music trade showcase, WOMEX, in Cardiff in 2013



Mabon, WOMEX 2010  
(image: Eric van Nieuwland)

## A more sustainable approach to our work



Adrian Paci, *Per Speculum* (2006)  
Artes Mundi 2009

### We're committed to working more sustainably.

Climate change and environmental protection are amongst the most urgent issues of our time. We want to help the arts sectors in understanding and addressing these issues, and to ensure that we demonstrate active leadership in helping to shape the cultural and creative industries for the future.

We'll learn from culturally specific research, such as that undertaken by

pioneering companies – such as the Centre for Alternative Technology and Julie's Bicycle – to set priorities for action. Our primary 'audience' in the first instance will be the artists and arts organisations who we fund and support. So we'll work to inform the efforts of artists and arts organisations as they try to reduce their environmental impact. But the arts are also a powerful – and effective – medium for exploring, debating and illuminating the complex human issues of our time. We see an important role for the arts in contributing to these wider discussions.

## We'll take practical steps to improve our own performance.

To be a credible champion in this area it's imperative that we too adopt a systematic approach across the operation of our own business.

We've signalled our intent by signing up to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter. We now wish to make five specific commitments:

1. We will respond meaningfully to the climate change challenge
2. We will improve our understanding of our environmental impacts and the implications of our working practices
3. We will act to minimise our impacts and improve environmental performance
4. We will report on and communicate our environmental impacts, and our efforts to reduce them
5. We will set targets that challenge ourselves to improve our performance

## A key target will be to achieve the Green Dragon Standard.

Within the Green Dragon Standard there are five levels, with each step contributing towards achievement of the international and European environmental standards ISO 14001 and EMAS. Within a three year period we should aim to achieve at least Level Three of the Green Dragon Standard.

### What can you expect to see?

- publication of an Environmental Review, Policy and Improvement Plan covering our operation and activities
- monitoring and reporting on our performance
- events and symposia to raise awareness and provide practical assistance

## Service delivery through the medium of Welsh and English

We're committed to providing the range of our services, across Wales, in Welsh and English.

We're a bilingual nation – legally, socially, culturally, and as individuals and communities. Nothing makes Wales more distinctive than the Welsh language. The language provides the means to understand and enjoy an extraordinarily rich literature and culture. The arts thrive on this and are a key component in continuing the Welsh language's vital role at the heart of Welsh life.

So in our future plans we intend to defend and promote vigorously the right of people to explore their own culture, their own creativity through the language of their choice, whether as consumer, participant or artist. We don't underestimate the scale of the challenge. We know, for example, that it's sometimes difficult to recruit Welsh speaking artists and arts managers to senior leadership positions in the arts in Wales.



*Deffro'r Gwanwyn*, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru  
(image: Kirsten McTernan)

The Arts Council of Wales will seek to lead by example.

Amongst our current staff, 56% are Welsh speakers (of whom 9% are Welsh learners). We expect a similar balance to be evident in our new structure.

We also expect those who we fund – and especially our revenue funded organisations – to respect and embrace the developmental actions that we'll be promoting through our new Welsh Language Scheme.

### What can you expect to see?

- publication of a revised Welsh Language Scheme and action plan
- monitoring and reporting on our performance
- advice and support to assist our revenue funded organisations in developing their own Welsh Language schemes
- funding to assist the development of creative practice through the medium of the Welsh language

## Collaborating in partnership with funders and stakeholders

The arts don't work in isolation, and neither should we.

We need to be more active in developing partnerships, locally, and nationally and internationally. Partnership between the Arts Council of Wales and local government provides the foundation of the arts in Wales. Between us, we have the potential to touch the lives of everyone.

Local Authority Councils bring to the table their local knowledge, broad range of responsibilities, cultural development and their democratic representation. The Arts Council brings expertise in the arts and a national and international perspective on arts practice and development.

The intrinsic value of the arts is now widely recognised. But the arts can also illuminate and give life to the wide range of strategies that underpin civic life. From arts and health to cultural tourism, public art to town centre regeneration, the arts bring meaning, authenticity and joy to our everyday lives. Working with our partners in local government, we create and sustain jobs, enrich education services, bring people together, improve our quality of life.

An important focus for our future work will be the development of a series of strategic local/regional arts partnerships.

During the tenure of the current Welsh Government we expect to see more collaboration and joint working across local authorities and other public bodies, organised around defined localities or regions. Being part of these developments will provide an efficient means of identifying future joint priorities and areas for partnership. We'll seek the advice of the Welsh Local Government Association in developing this new approach.

**The Welsh Government is the Arts Council's principal financial sponsor.**

The Welsh Government's objective is to build a better Wales, and for that ambition to encompass the arts. We work to deliver this objective.

As an arts charity, we've a legal duty to develop and promote the arts to the best of our abilities. We won't be timid. We're expected to campaign for the funds that we believe the arts need to grow and flourish. We'll be determined and vigorous in presenting our case. But as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body we've a particular obligation to work positively and effectively to turn government policy into practical action.

We're committed to maintaining an accountable, respectful and dynamic relationship with the Welsh Government. And it's right that our independent decision making responsibilities should sit comfortably with the Government's proper need to have a clear view of how it wants to see taxpayers' money invested.

### Developing relationships and collaboration beyond Wales.

Given the increasingly globalised world that we live in, our links with international organisations are growing in importance. We collaborate closely with our colleagues in the UK Arts Councils, often jointly funding arts activity that crosses borders. And our European funded projects help us to grow the arts economy in Wales, enabling us to invest in new or under developed areas of cultural activity. Drawing in to Wales' additional investment through our collaborations with other partners will continue to be an important feature of our future activities.

### What can you expect to see?

- partnership agreements with local government, nationally, regionally and individually
- a named member of Arts Council staff acting as a lead contact for each local authority
- publication in our annual report of our progress in delivering the requirements in our Welsh Government Remit Letter
- a co-ordinated strategy for capitalising on the opportunities available through European funding

## Developing our relationship with revenue funded organisations



WNO *Meistersinger*  
Walther (Raymond Verry) & Hans Sachs (Bryn Terfel)  
(image: Catherine Ashmore)

Our revenue funded organisations are at the heart of the delivery of our arts objectives.

Revenue funded organisations (RFOs) also receive the majority of Arts Council funding. Given the scale of our investment in RFOs – and the expectations that we have of them – we need a carefully calibrated relationship. We need to be able to provide public assurance that funds are being appropriately used, and that RFOs are operating at optimum performance. However, we need also to recognise the potential within our RFOs to make the arts in Wales better and more widely available.

Our current relationship is broadly based on two types of interaction:

- **the transactional** – managing the annual funding cycle, issuing funding documentation, monitoring financial returns, organising the schedule of Annual Review Meetings. Much of this activity is administrative in nature, and requires limited specific arts expertise

- **the developmental** – this requires the deployment of different types of specialist or technical expertise: the skills to negotiate funding partnerships, an awareness of national and international developments, the ability to advise on complex capital projects, and knowledge of business and organisational planning issues

We want to go further in our relationship with RFOs and adopt a more ‘bespoke’ approach which is closely aligned to the various needs that an RFO might have.

### Different skills are required for different needs.

It’s about matching the right expertise to the job that’s needed. Informed by our knowledge of the organisations that we fund, we’re able to deliver a clearer view of the different needs of our RFOs. No two RFOs are the same, and we need to develop a better understanding of where we must concentrate our efforts, and on what.

We don’t think that the answer is a ‘one size fits all’ light touch approach. It’s about getting the right touch, appropriate to particular circumstances – a team-based approach to matching the appropriate skills to the more demanding tasks. RFOs will still have the continuity of a single ‘lead officer’, but through that single point of contact, RFOs will have access to a wider pool of expertise from across our whole organisation.

### What can you expect to see?

- a named member of Arts Council staff acting as a lead contact for each revenue funded organisation
- easier access, where it’s needed, to the full range of the Arts Council’s arts, business, financial and technical expertise
- increased capability for revenue funded organisations to provide monitoring data online
- a workshop and training programme for those revenue funded organisations that want to develop their approach to organisational and business performance
- more regular and detailed feedback on the data and intelligence that we compile from information provided by our RFOs

## Simplifying our application and reporting processes

We spend a lot of time processing, assessing and monitoring funding applications.

We know too that grant applications take time to complete. So we want to simplify our grant funding processes. The introduction of a new online application process will help us to achieve this.

At present, we take great care to advise potential applicants in advance on how to develop and improve their applications. And we discourage applicants whose projects, in our professional judgement, stand little prospect of success. This is an important part of our developmental role, making sure that funding works harder in helping us to deliver our arts priorities.

Good quality advice at the beginning of the application process means that it's more likely that we can assist the genuinely strong application. And given the importance of our funding role, this is clearly a 'core' service that we must deliver as effectively and helpfully as we can.

Our commitment to accessible and helpful advice will continue in the future.

But under our new proposals we'll create an entirely different way of handling funding advice through the creation of an integrated Information/Help Desk service.

The priority will be to ensure that the right type of advice is given by the right person, and that we use our specialist expertise wisely and productively. The development of a new online system will also bring important efficiencies, with a significant reduction in the amount of time that we need to spend re-keying information and data. And whilst we'll retain the ability to process 'hard copy' applications in those cases where an online application isn't possible, we believe that online processes will be easier and more straightforward for the applicants themselves.

We launch an online pilot during the early part of 2012.

### What can you expect to see?

- new, and simpler, funding guidelines
- clearer information and advice to applicants – on our website, by telephone, or through face to face meetings with our staff
- the introduction of online applications processes

## Improving our information and advisory services

The provision of advice and information – whether related to funding or to other aspects of our work – is one of our most important services.

The quality with which we deliver this service has a key impact on our overall reputation and credibility.

Managing requests for information and advice can be challenging. So investing more time and energy into managing this aspect of our work will be an important priority for our new organisation.

We want to radically improve the quality of our information and advice giving.

And the improvements will begin the moment that someone first contacts us.

Staffed by a trained and skilled group of Information Advisers, the Help Desk will manage calls and deal with them where they can. We will also develop our printed and online guidance, informed by the information requests that we receive.

Information Advisers will be trained to provide an effective diagnostic service. The aim is to create a 'one stop' advisory service, dealing with the majority of enquiries there and then. Calls will only be referred on if the subject matter requires more specialist knowledge and expertise. Information Advisers will be able to manage appointments and arrange for a phone consultation or face to face meeting with more locally based experts.

### What can you expect to see?

- a new Help Desk, providing high quality advice and information
- improved handling of specialist requests, making better use of the full range of our specialist expertise
- bookable advice 'surgeries', over the phone or in person
- information and advisory workshops held across Wales
- improved information available through our website

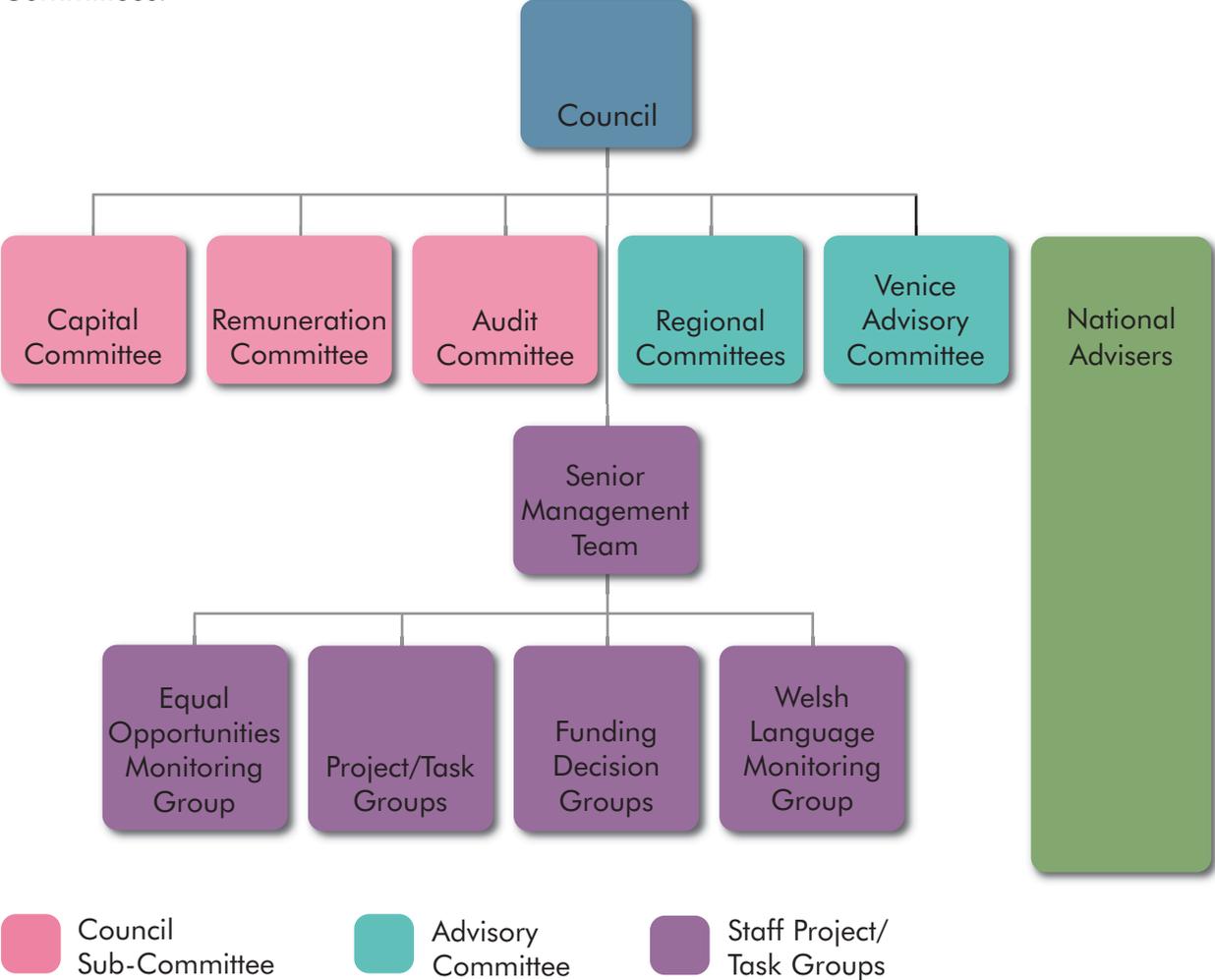
# Our organisational structure

## Governance

Council members of the Arts Council of Wales are appointed by the Welsh Government’s Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage, following a process of public recruitment. The Welsh Government is currently recruiting new Council members, and they will be in place from April 2012.

The Arts Council’s governance structures – comprising Council, its sub-committees and advisory groups – will remain unchanged. We intend, however, to enhance the role of our Regional Committees.

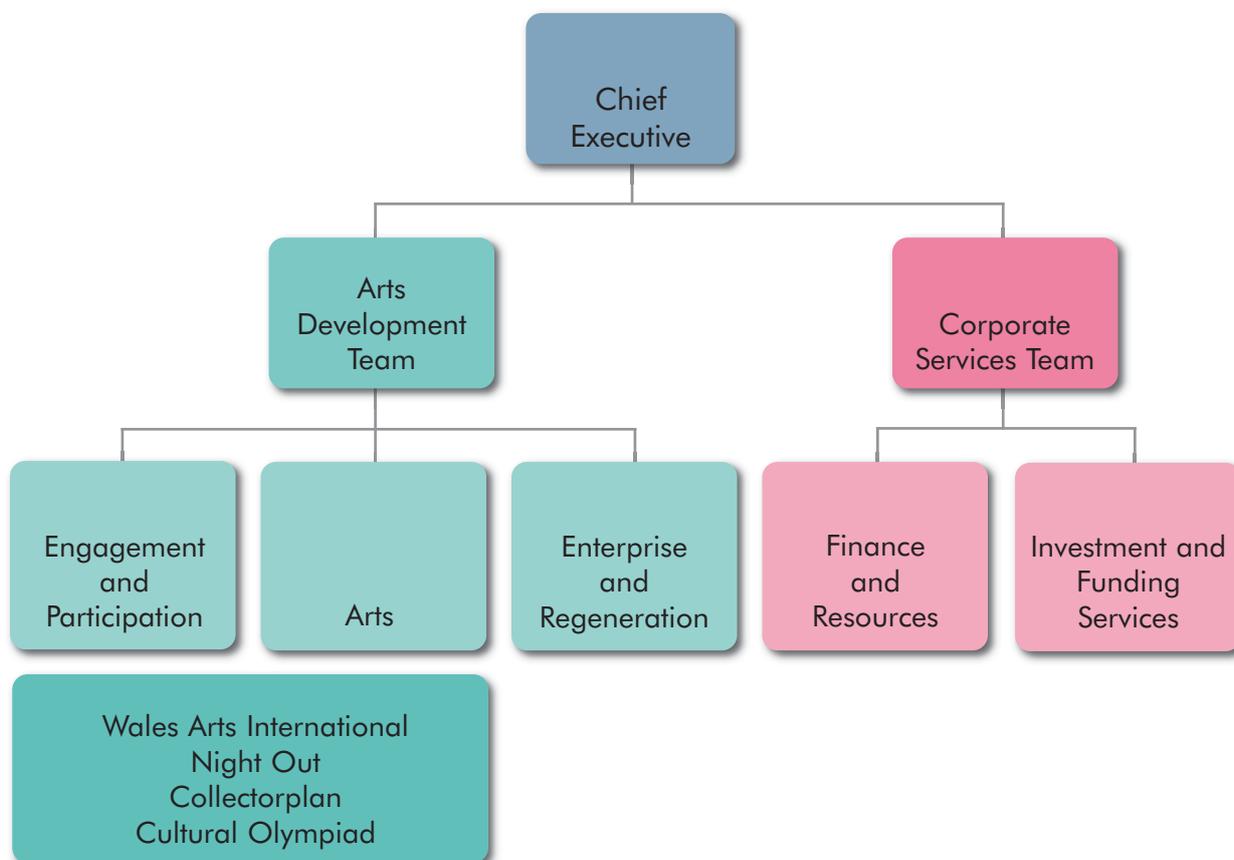
We see great value in the local connections that our Committees can offer, providing information, insight and intelligence from across Wales. We want to build on these strengths. Chaired by a Council member, we want to develop the Committees into fora that draw on the skills of a wider network of individuals across Wales. We also want to see them more directly involved in our discussion and development of national policy.



## Our new Business Model

The Business Model has the following features:

- **a strong national organisation, delivering locally** – significant in terms of Scale, Impact, Reach, and Consistency, but providing high quality services, on the ground, that are available and accessible across all parts of Wales
- **a smaller executive staff team** – we will have a permanent executive team of 76 full time equivalent staff, based in our offices in Cardiff, Carmarthen and Colwyn Bay
- **a clearer focus on the delivery of Council's priorities** – a more integrated approach to Arts Development, based around three areas of policy priority: Arts; Engagement and Participation; Enterprise and Regeneration
- **robust business services** – a focused Corporate Services function built around: Investment and Funding Services; Finance and Resources
- **a simplification of our senior management structures** – we're changing our current structure model from two National and three Regional Directors, to a single tier of five Directors (three of whom will also have a geographical responsibility across regions in Wales)
- **a flexible resource of specialist expertise** – staff organised around portfolios that encompass a wider range of arts and business specialisms
- **improved information and advisory services** – a new Information Service and Help Desk managing public enquiries and requests for specialist advice
- **the continuation of our 'branded' services** – Wales Arts International, Night Out, Collectorplan and London 2012/Cultural Olympiad



## The Chief Executive's Team

The Team's principal responsibilities include:

- **Governance** – ensuring that the activities of Council, Committees and staff are managed in an effective, compliant and publicly accountable fashion. This responsibility extends across all of our activities, from the conduct of Council's business to the way that we manage and administer our funding programmes
- **Leadership** – co-ordinating the planning and delivery of our arts agenda
- **Management** – ensuring the effective use of our intellectual, financial, physical and human assets
- **Advocacy** – ensuring that the work of the Arts Council, and the activities that we fund, are communicated and promoted in a vigorous and persuasive fashion

## The Arts Development Team

The three Directors in the Arts Development Team work together to lead and co-ordinate the development of policy, organise the deployment of our specialist arts expertise, and oversee the practical delivery of Council's priorities.

The Team's principal responsibilities include:

- **Governance** – enabling the effective and accountable management of the Arts Council's business by supporting the work of Council and its Committees
- **Policy** – initiating, developing and leading the implementation of policy
- **Expertise** – leading and organising the provision of high quality advice and expertise
- **Quality** – promoting the pursuit of excellence in the arts in Wales by managing advisory and monitoring services that assist in the raising of standards
- **Engagement** – encouraging the development of positive and collaborative relationships with artists and arts organisations
- **Partnerships** – facilitating joint working with regional, national and international cultural agencies



*The Container*  
Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries  
Director - Bridget Keehan  
(image: Kirsten McTernan)

## The core of our Arts Development Team will be our specialist arts experts.

7 senior members of staff will act as Portfolio Managers, ensuring that the full range of our arts expertise is better organised and co-ordinated. They will be expected to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to arts development, and possess considerable expertise across a range of arts and/or technical disciplines. These will be senior staff, equally at home talking about the arts, management or financial issues.

A typical Portfolio Manager might therefore have a job content that includes some of the following:

- a 'package' of arts or professional specialisms (for example: performing arts, crafts, research)
- a policy lead (for example: research, education)
- a geographical role (for example: a local authority area or sub region of Wales)
- a programme or project management responsibility (for example: overseeing quality appraisal, or assisting in the development of a capital project)
- an organisational mentoring role (for example: providing specialist assistance to one of our RFOs)

- specialist advice and involvement in funding decision meetings
- seeing and reporting on arts activity

Across the Arts Development Team there will be a flexible resource of 16 Development Officers who will – individually and collectively – provide a comprehensive range of arts expertise.

### Arts

Leads and co-ordinates the development of policy, organises the deployment of our specialist arts expertise, and oversees the practical delivery of Council's arts priorities. The Director (Arts) has managerial responsibility for Wales Arts International and provides the secretariat to the Wales in Venice Advisory Committee.

Arts staff will ensure that the Arts Council can talk with authority on the arts, and that we have the knowledge, experience and confidence to make artistic judgements.

Key areas of policy responsibility include: theatre, music, dance, visual arts, crafts, festivals, circus, carnival, literature, artists film and international activity.

## **Engagement and Participation**

Leads and co-ordinates the development of policy, ensuring that those policies are consistent with, and support, the delivery of Welsh Government objectives. The Director (Engagement and Participation) has responsibility for the Night Out service and the delivery of Wales' contribution to the Cultural Olympiad.

Engagement and Participation staff will put into action the Council's determination to see a more dynamic approach to developing and nurturing new arts audiences, especially where there are social, economic, financial and geographical barriers to engagement and participation. Developing a coherent and effective response to the Welsh Government's Child Poverty strategy is an important new priority.

Key areas of policy responsibility include: audience development; community, participative and voluntary arts; equalities; inclusivity and diversity; arts and young people; child poverty; arts education; arts and health; arts and older people; touring and venue development.

## **Enterprise and Regeneration**

Leads and co-ordinates the development of policy, ensuring that those policies are

consistent with, and support, the objectives of partners and stakeholders and that the Arts Council is able to help grow and develop the arts economy in Wales. The Director (Enterprise and Regeneration) has responsibility for the Collectorplan scheme and other initiatives focused on income generation. The postholder will also co-ordinate our approach to European funding opportunities.

Enterprise and Regeneration staff will put into action the Council's ambitions to bring a more entrepreneurial approach to creating the business environment in which the Arts Council, and the individuals and organisations that it supports, can thrive. This will involve identifying appropriate strategies for engagement with the wider creative industries and the exploration of new funding models that will enhance the impact of public investment in the arts. Team members will also be the principal point of contact for Local Government in Wales.

Key areas of policy responsibility include: creative industries; broadcasting; digital arts; market and business development; arts and business; workforce development, skills and training; arts and sustainability; research; local government; public/private partnerships; capital policy; fundraising/income generation.

## The Corporate Services Team

The two Directors in the Corporate Services Team work together to ensure that our financial systems, grants management, monitoring and reporting processes meet the highest standards of effectiveness, accountability and transparency.

- **Governance** – enabling the effective and accountable management of the Arts Council’s business by supporting the work of Council and its Committees
- **Research and Evaluation** – contributing data and business intelligence to assist with the development and monitoring of policy
- **Statutory reporting** – managing the production of Annual Accounts and other financial information as required by the Welsh Government, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Charity Commission
- **Internal audit** – liaising with, and assisting, Council’s internal and external auditors
- **Financial, grants management and reporting** – ensuring the efficient and timely processing of financial transactions, grants payments and financial management information
- **Grants management** – providing robust and efficient systems for managing and monitoring all of the Council’s funding programmes, including project monitoring, the analysis of funding data, database administration and the establishment of online application processes
- **Monitoring and risk management** – ensuring that the financial and organisational health of our RFOs and key projects is appropriately monitored, with key risks identified and managed
- **Business development** – provision of business advice to RFOs and key projects
- **Information** – establishing a new Information/Help Desk function to lead and co-ordinate our information/ advisory services
- **Information Communications Technology** – managing the delivery and maintenance of robust and secure ICT services
- **Human Resources** – developing and managing HR policy and maintaining positive relationships with our recognised trade union, Unite
- **Facilities management** – ensuring that Arts Council staff have access to safe, secure office accommodation and to the equipment and facilities they need to do their job



Anne Gibbs, *Correspondences 2011* (detail, seeds)

## **Investment and Funding Services**

Leads and co-ordinates the services that support our management, monitoring and evaluation of our funding programmes. The Director (Investment and Funding Services) provides the secretariat to Council's Capital Committee.

Investment and Funding Services staff focus particularly on monitoring RFOs, managing the delivery of Lottery Capital projects, introducing online applications process and other e-business systems, and the establishment of a new and improved Information Service.

Key areas of service responsibility include: grants management for Treasury/Lottery programmes; RFO monitoring; managing Lottery capital processes; managing arrangements for Lottery delegation to the Film Agency; developing the business capacity of RFOs; managing funding reviews; research, evaluation, business intelligence and analysis of arts funding; information and advisory services.

## **Finance and Resources**

Leads, co-ordinates and reports on the efficient management and stewardship of Council's financial, physical and human resources. Key to this will be cost-effective management of the Arts Council's buildings estate, its procurement of business services, and its use of automated/e-business systems. The Director (Finance and Resources) provides the Secretariat to the Council's Audit and Remuneration Committees. The postholder also fulfils the position of Trustee on the Arts Council Retirement Plan.

Principal areas of service responsibility include: financial management (processing of all financial transactions); financial reporting (budget management, the production of management and statutory accounts); internal/external audit; ICT; HR; facilities management (including Health and Safety); procurement; business continuity; project management and financial services.

# Delivering the savings

## Financial summary

Our grant in aid budget for 2010/11 serves as the baseline. The amount of funding we are able to spend on our own running costs is being reduced, from £2.478m to £2.181m between 2010/11 and 2013/14. This provides us with the challenge of removing £297,000 (or - 12%) from our costs (whilst at the same time having to continue to cover the inevitable inflationary pressures we will face during the next three years).

A significant amount of the saving is achieved through the reduction of staff numbers from 90.2 full time equivalent posts to 76 posts – a reduction of some 16%. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14, this delivers a saving on the staff costs element of our grant-in-aid running cost budget of some £0.126m.

A further saving of £0.171m will be achieved in our non staff running costs through a series of cost cutting measures and changes in how and where we work.

### Significant non-staff costs are associated with our office buildings.

We need appropriate, accessible office facilities for our staff working across Wales. We're not planning to close our existing offices. We do, however, believe that reductions in staff numbers mean that

we can achieve savings by reducing the size of our office space in Cardiff. This is our most immediate priority.

As existing leases on our other office buildings come to an end, we'll explore whether we can secure more competitively priced alternative accommodation. This will be a normal part of our ongoing commitment to controlling costs, and we'd always rather spend money on staff than on buildings.

Our lease on our Colwyn Bay office expires in May of next year, and this will provide an early opportunity for us to test the market. If we can retain Colwyn Bay at the best price, and one that achieves savings, then we'd obviously rather avoid a disruptive move.

We're not, however, waiting until 2013/14 to achieve the benefit of the savings.

Change on this scale inevitably means we will incur transition costs (redundancy, development of eBusiness/online systems, ICT equipment and training). By implementing our change programme proposals now, rather than waiting until 2013, we begin to offset our transition costs, ensuring that the benefits of savings begin to accrue early in the new financial year and throughout 2013/14. This will help negate the transition costs and to achieve the lower cost platform for our running costs that we want to achieve for the future.

## And finally...

We want to be a leading player in Welsh cultural and civic life.

We wish to do this not complacently or in isolation, but by harnessing the expertise and passion of Council and its staff, by orchestrating alliances and partnerships across the arts, and by demonstrating, unequivocally, that we're an organisation that can make things happen.

In future, we'll be much clearer about the outcomes that we're trying to achieve.

Across the public sector there's a renewed emphasis on the requirement to deliver practical outcomes that benefit the people of Wales. There's also a more sophisticated understanding of the benefits of working collaboratively with partners and the public – the 'co-production' of outcomes rather than their imposition. These new ways of working are just as relevant to us.

As we know, the arts can deliver inspiring and engaging work across a wide range of public policy agendas. This presents an equally wide range of new opportunities. The temptation for us will be to try and take advantage of every opportunity. But we're acutely aware of the dangers of promising too much. If we spread ourselves too thinly, we risk exceeding our capacity to deliver. So we will make choices about our priorities, and explain clearly the reasons for those choices.

Our challenge, then, is simple – but it won't be easy...

We must make changes – changes that will be difficult and challenging for us.

But this won't deter us from pressing hard to find the right answers. There are always risks and uncertainties in trying to embrace a new future that can never be fully known in advance. However, with the imagination, energy and commitment of our staff, anything is possible. And with the collaboration and good will of partners and stakeholders, we're confident that we can work together to achieve continued success for many years to come.



Mary Stuart by Friedrich Schiller, Clwyd Theatr Cymru  
(image: Nobby Clark)